your anchor here and rest». (Der Friedhof. Sämtl. Gedichte 764
von Alex. Graf von Württemberg. Leipzig. Reclam-Ausgabe.)
To this day grave decorations of this kind can be found in great numbers in the Calvinist cemetaries of the Great Plain and Transylvania, they are most beautiful samples of the Hungarian art of wood carving. While the pike holder is being set up, or even previously, and while the earth drops into the grave, the favourite songs of the deceased are played, even gay tunes, lively csárdás songs . . .

When they come back from the graveyard, the funeral 765 ●
feast begins. At first all the poor who have assembled for the occasion are given food. During the funeral feast there is even more gaiety than at the vigil, and in some parts it gradually changes into a joyous feast, as though the funeral had been exchanged for a wedding . . . Because of this strange kind of last wedding feast in many parts even the very old women are buried in their wedding dress, and old men in the clothes which they were given by their fiancées many years previously. This last wedding is especially the due share of an unmarried lad or girl. They are the bridegrooms or brides of Heaven . . . so they have a right to a wedding celebration. At this kind of wedding feast people dance, sing and enjoy themselves as though it were the real wedding of the person in question.

In olden days this custom of feasting the wedding of a dead youth or girl was habitual amongst the rich as well as amongst the poor. Coloman Mikes, nobleman of Transylvania (he died in 1686) also feasted the wedding of his only daughter who had died unmarried in the prime of her life. At the funeral feast he declared that if his daughter had not died, they certainly would have celebrated her wedding. As he had married his daughter to Our Saviour Christ, Mikes expected: «All who love me to be gay at my house to-day!» And gay they were,

765 music and dance filled the house and the feasting guests enjoyed themselves until the early morning hours with the father of the deceased bride of Heaven.

According to one evidence in the 17th century there still existed a special dance of the dead, or «death dance», in which the deceased was also represented.

At a funeral feast the popularized church song «The Wedding of Kanaan» was usually sung; this is one of its many verses:

Let us pray to God that we shall rejoice
When we'll announce our wedding,
Without good wine, and without pipes
It is as senseless as a dance without hops.

In olden times the «marriage dance» of the death wedding was performed by the grave, but later on, in consequence of Church prohibitions, only just inside the graveyard gate, and at last only outside it. The farewell song of a dead girl details fully the analogy between an earthly and a heavenly wedding. The following lines illustrate this best:

My priest is my father
And my good minister.
The choirmaster who sings
Is my best man and my witness.
My bridesmaids are
The spades and hoes here used.
Such is my wedding!

In some parts they beg leave to give the deceased girl away, using the same words as for a live bride.

765 822 To-day the colour of mourning is usually black, but there are districts where it is still white, purple, blue or some other colour. The ghost rising from its grave also appears in a white garment in the world of the living. The bearers of a dead girl in many parts dress in white; in a

765 822 few villages the mourning women tie a white linen band onto their forehead. Many a folk song, which is still sung to this day, preserves old popular customs:

> While I live, I'll dress in black,
> When I'm dead, I'll walk in white...

Or another one:

> Mother dear!
> Find my white dress,
> I'm starting on a journey
> From which I shan't return.

Even older memories are referred to in this folk song:

> I'd rather mourn for her in three colours of mourning:
> On Friday in red,
> On Saturday in white,
> On Sunday in dead black...

765 There are places where the funeral feast is repeated at certain regular intervals. At this feast they lay a place for the deceased, crossing his knife with his fork, and putting his turned up plate on top of them, while his chair is left empty. According to a local custom when the wailing Hungarian mourners of Moldavia are offered brandy and bread, they always lift their glass and wish that the dead could also share in their drink.

775 According to the Funeral Speech (a historic relic from the 12th century we are dust and ashes... But according to the still live faith of our ancient religion: non omnis moriar... We shall rise again. And our people believe faithfully that we do not even die, our soul merely flies to a new world, to start a new life.

764 The crosses in the graveyard are decorated with resounding inscriptions invented either by the master carver himself, or if he has no poetic vein, then another village professional, the verse composer writes them. These inscrip-